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REVIEWS

ANN HEIRMAN – MATHIEU TORCK: *A Pure Mind in a Clean Body – Bodily Care in the Buddhist Monasteries of Ancient India and China*. Gent, Academia Press, 2012, 194 pages.
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The present work under review is a fascinating study on practices and ideas related to bodily care in ancient Indian and Chinese Buddhist monasteries. It offers the reader a close look into the everyday life of Buddhist monastic communities, a vivid and authentic picture of the daily life in a monastery. Instead of focusing on eminent monks and their achievements, the identity of the saṃgha as a community is being shaped in front of us, and the image of the ordinary monk/nun engaged in his/her everyday duties emerges in front of our eyes.

While having the same profane and trivial daily duties as ordinary people, by the guiding principles of the *vinaya* and other texts containing rules and guidelines about correct behaviour and attitude, even the most profane acts gain a sense of sacrality, and even the most trivial gestures have their importance in the light of the firm belief that a monk's outward behaviour is always a reflection of one's inner identity. Therefore a monk/nun must pay careful attention to his/her outward appearance, since the cleanliness and spotlessness of the body are considered to be expressions of a pure mind. Furthermore, members of the monastic community are expected to show a respectful, exemplary behaviour all the time, being models for the lay society. While reading this book we learn that being a monk/nun means much more than performing religious acts, such as meditation, reciting of sacred scriptures, etc., it also implies a permanent awareness throughout one's daily activities, severely keeping a proper state of mind and an exemplary outward attitude, even while performing such daily activities like taking a bath or going to the toilet. The lengthy and elaborate discussions on proper attitude and behaviour, the most detailed and explicit rules and regulations from the *vinaya* and other related texts serve the purpose of defining the ideal, exemplary way to behave in all circumstances.

The book aims to present and analyse objects and practices related to bodily care – being most essential but often overlooked constituents of daily life – within the environment of early Buddhist monasteries in India and China. These practices – as the authors point out –, being part of daily routine, create a sense of continuity, and form the identity of the saṃgha. Much attention

is paid to presenting the development and changing of utensils and practices, and also related ideas and attitudes, used in bodily care, while moving through space and time. Throughout their way from India to China these practices were reconsidered and reshaped, therefore the authors draw the conclusion that bodily care practices performed in the Buddhist monasteries of China were shaped by both environments and conditions, and received the strong influence of local lay practices. The authors carefully analyse how basic objects and practices were received, applied, adapted, neglected or rejected in the Chinese environment. Solid arguments are presented to prove that bodily care practices in Chinese Buddhist monasteries took shape both through Indian transmission and new inventions, and were products of a close interaction between the secular and the religious world.

While the *vinaya* texts (being of Indian provenance) offer a rich source of information about utensils, practices, ideas and attitudes essential in bodily care practices, these are complemented by commentaries, new guidelines and manuals written by Chinese masters, and detailed accounts of Chinese monk travellers, all being valuable primary sources for the present study. The background information gained from archaeological findings, literary works, paintings, etc. complement the great variety of textual sources.

The main chapters of the book are centred around four important areas of bodily care: (1) bathing facilities, (2) toilet facilities, (3) cleaning the mouth and teeth and (4) shaving the hair and trimming the nails.

Bathing is one of the most important aspects of bodily care, therefore special attention is given to why and how to organise bathing in a Buddhist community. The above-mentioned textual sources contain comprehensive guidelines on bathing practices and techniques, reveal the ideal setting of a bathhouse, enumerate the utensils used, etc. Besides the general ideas and guidelines, readers also learn some fascinating details about ancient bathing practices. For example, we find out that quite frequent bathing was advocated, and water was always an important element of it. While *vinaya* guidelines show deep concern for the cleanliness and health of the body, the Chinese commentaries and newly compiled guidelines place less emphasis on health, and more on cleanliness and purity. Different attitudes towards nakedness – which is linked to sexual attraction, shame and embarrassment, all to be avoided by a monk – are given lengthy discussions as well. Not only practical rules on how to make and use bathing facilities, what utensils to use and how to behave in a bathhouse, etc. are related, but also general principles which credit bathing an important role in a religious community, such as the direct link between external cleanliness and internal purity of the mind, the close connection between outward nature of the body and morality, in the light of which a clean, shining body is seen as a sign of great virtue. The practice of bathing is associated with feelings of humility, even shame, therefore such practical rules like looking down while entering a bathhouse, respecting hierarchy, the bathing process performed in silence, conducted in a dignified manner, etc. are advocated.

The chapter on toilet facilities describes how to make toilet facilities and how to use them properly. Practical rules include the following: a toilet facility in a monastery should always be separated from other buildings, a toilet house should include more facilities divided by walls and a separate washing place, and – probably for health concerns – it is recommended for a monk never to delay going to the toilet. Some important rules about using the toilet – described as a quasi-ritual process, with a number of objects to be used and a strict sequencing of actions – are avoiding embarrassing situations, keeping oneself clean, showing respect towards monastic and lay people, and maintaining a clean and pure image of the saṃgha, etc.

From the chapter on cleaning the mouth and teeth we find out that a monk/nun should clean his/her teeth regularly in order to avoid bad smell, which might annoy fellow monks and lay people, therefore, it can be embarrassing, and in order to prevent digestive problems. The teeth

and mouth are mirrors of the personality, healthy teeth and good breath indicate a healthy person, pure both in body and mind. The *vinaya*s recommend the usage of a 'tooth wood' (a small wooden branch one has to chew) for cleaning the teeth, a practice widespread in India. The 'tooth wood' was probably an efficient utensil for dental care, since the Chinese traveller monk, Yijing observed that "toothache is almost unknown is western countries because the locals chew tooth wood". The Chinese sources show that although they were aware of the existence of 'tooth wood', it was not widespread in Chinese monasteries, and the Japanese monk, Dōgen, who travelled in China, observed that "Chinese monks did not know how to use tooth wood, as a result, their breath was foul". In China certain powdery substances might have been used instead, and mouth rinsing seems to have been a common practice.

The last chapter deals with the procedures of shaving the hair and trimming the nails. The hair of the head – or more precisely the lack of it – is an important identity marker for Buddhists, since shaving of the head symbolises leaving the lay world and becoming a monk. Together with shaving the head, a monk should also shave his beard, and hair should be kept short all along, for which purpose cutting the hair at least once in two month is recommended. Nails of a monk/nun should also be shortened and cleaned, since long nails are symbols of nobility in the lay world, associated with vanity, an attitude to be avoided by monks and nuns. The authors point out that while shaving the hair of the head (and beard), symbolising asexuality and dignity, is recommended, the shaving of the armpits and pubic hair, done for the purpose of sexual attraction by lay people, is strictly forbidden for monks and nuns.

In the last concluding remarks it is pointed out that bodily care practices, being activities of everyday life, were bridges between the two worlds of monastic and lay society, which were constantly interacting with each other. The exemplary, socially spotless behaviour of the saṃgha was a basic expectation of the lay society, and therefore detailed guidelines were continuously formulated, shaped and reshaped striving to achieve and maintain this ideal image. Every kind of pollution, like dirt, sweat, bad smell etc., was seen to damage one's self-respect and the dignity of the whole Buddhist community. The authors highlight that the main purpose of bodily care practices was not improving hygiene and avoiding illnesses, as we might expect, but the desire to achieve an ideal state of external and internal purity, while severely keeping one's decency and dignity.

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ANNA KRASNOWOLSKA: *Mythes, croyances populaires et symbolique animale dans la littérature persane*. Paris, Association pour l'avancement des études Iraniennes, 2012 (Studia Iranica 48). 244 pages.
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The author's interest in calendar mythology, Persian heroic epic poetry and the imaginary of classical and modern Persian literature is evidenced by her former works. The present book contains five studies, each of them based on earlier publications which have been revised and supplemented to constitute a coherent volume. While the chapters rely on diverse literary texts, they remain closely linked: each study introduces a symbolic animal (bull, scorpion, nightingale, boar and horse) through literary sources, analyses its mythological background, and demonstrates the continuation of the motif in literary or folklore tradition.

The first study (*Kākil – Gāv-e Gil. Mysterieux héros d'une fête hivernale*: pp. 31–66) analyses the mythological background of the so-called Kākil festival on the basis of available literary sources. The principal source of the survey is the *Chronology* of Bīrūnī (*Kitāb al-āṯār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-ḫāliya*), more precisely the Azkā'ī edition of the text (Tehran, 1380/2001) which prompted Krasnowolska to reconsider and supplement her earlier work on the topic (Krasnowolska 1998). Beyond the abovementioned work, Krasnowolska utilises an impressive amount of primary sources including

Al-qānūn al-masᶜūdī of Bīrūnī, the *Zayn al-akhbār* of Gardīzī, and the *ᶜAjā'ib al-maḥlūqāt* of Qazwīnī, in addition to the translated editions of topic-relevant pre-Islamic texts. In the first section of the study Krasnowolska introduces the feast on the basis of the sources, and tackles its rich mythological background, referring to the characters that appear in the narratives, such as Farīdūn, Żaḥḥāk, and Jamšīd. In determining the place of the feast in the year, she comes to the conclusion that according to the Zoroastrian sources it seems to be originally a vernal pastoral festival. The animal patron of the Kākil festival corresponds on many levels to Barmāye and Barmāyun of the myth of Farīdūn. Regarding the etymology of Kākil's name, Krasnowolska assumes that the first part of it definitely derives from *gāv* 'cow, bull' whereas the origin of the second element of the compound word is less clear. Having enumerated previous interpretations, Krasnowolska comes to the conclusion that the most adequate etymology is *gil* 'soil, clay, earth', and accordingly she proposes that the bull's name should be interpreted as 'Bull [made/originating] from the Earth'. Finally, the sacrificial ceremony and its connection to Islamic traditions, in particular the continuation of it in ᶜĪd-i Qurbān, are described.

The starting point of the second study (*Une formule magique contre les scorpions*: pp. 67–94) is Bīrūnī's report in the *Chronology* about the pre-Islamic Isfandārmaz festival, a part of which having been the custom of chasing scorpions out of the house. However, Bīrūnī in one of his other major works (*Al-Tafhīm*) denies the ancient origin of the practice. Referring to Zoroastrian and Middle-Persian sources which contain greatly similar spells on scorpions to that of Bīrūnī's, Krasnowolska convincingly proves the pre-Islamic origin, and draws attention to the inconsistency of Bīrūnī's different accounts. On the basis of anthropological descriptions, Krasnowolska expounds the continuation of the tradition among the Parsi rural communities (Modi, Kanga) in India, as well as other groups in Iran and Afghanistan (Injāwī) and in Tajikistan (Muxiddinov). Finally, in order to complete her arguments, Krasnowolska draws attention to the mythological and astrological background of the Isfandārmaz festival.

The next study (*Le rossignol et le poète:* pp. 95–135) deals with the most current and well-known motif of Persian *ghazal* poetry: the rose-and-nightingale. The author has discussed the motif's appearance in epical tradition in one of her previous studies (Krasnowolska 2006b), the revised version of which is the first part (*Le rossignol dans la tradition épique*) of the present treatise. Here the motif's pre-Islamic background – mainly on the basis of Firdawsī's epic – is elucidated, in which the singing nightingale is often seen as if mourning on a rosebush for a killed hero. This scene is closely related to a vernal garden idyll, more precisely a violent spring-storm, which represents the passionate love between the sky and the earth, as well as the resurrection of nature. The most remarkable characteristic of the nightingale in epic and early lyric poetry is how this image perpetuates ancient traditions by recalling them in a sacral (Arabic, Pahlavi) or simply archaic terminology which is used to describe the glorious past. According to some elements of the Iranian folklore tradition, which refer to the belief that birds embody the souls of the dead, the nightingale's desire for the rose can be interpreted as the soul's desire for the body. The second part of the study deals with the continuation of the above-mentioned poetical images of the nightingale in different literary periods and genres, by interpreting, reconsidering, and developing their various aspects. Krasnowolska's goal is not giving an exhaustive survey of the motif's development, but showing its main stages as they are reflected by classical Persian poets. Accordingly, it is argued that in the Samanid era (9th–10th centuries) the lyrical poets such as Rūdakī, Kisā'ī Marwazī and Munjīk Tirmiẕī mainly use the image of the nightingale as a lover singing on a rosebush; whereas the poets of the early Ghaznavid court (11th century), such as Farrukhī, Manūčihrī, and ᶜUnṣurī prefer to use the nightingale-motif as a metaphor of the court poet which becomes a constant element of the so-called vernal *qaṣīda*s. In Sufi poetry (Rūmī) the bird represents the previous soul–body dicho-

tomy, but now it becomes the allegory of the spirit's desire for union with God which is best exemplified among the birds by the eloquent and poetical nightingale. Finally, in the *ghazal*s of Ḥāfiẓ the aspect of desperate love and the mastery of poetry are closely linked, thus the nightingale becomes the poet's *alter ego* who is also aware of the secrets of love and can create unique and eloquent poetry. The final conclusion of the essay is that although the nightingale's role and function in different eras and literary genres are varied, there is a constant characteristic: it always represents intellectual or emotional individuality and uniqueness, be it an embodiment or mediator in the ancient tradition, a desperate lover, a master of poetry, or a Sufi mystic.

In one of her earlier articles, Krasnowolska (2006a) dealt with the main functions of dreams in Persian epic literature; in the present study (*Arbre – animal – eau. Le songe de Xosrow Nušinravān:* pp. 137–170) she investigates a special model in which three symbolic elements – a tree, an animal and a liquid (originally a spring) – are arranged in a specific order. The starting point is Nūšīnrawān's symbolic dream about a king sitting under a tree in front of his throne, accompanied by a boar with which he is drinking wine. According to the young Buzurgmihr's interpretation – which proves to be correct – there is an intruder (boar) in the king's (tree) harem, who must be the true lover of one of the king's concubines (wine). There is a similar scene with parallel structure in Gurgānī's epic poem, the *Wīs u Rāmīn*. Although it is not narrated as a dream, but as a performance of a *gūsān* (minstrel) at the occasion of a court feast, the three key symbols with the same meaning appear: under a fruitful tree (king) a bull (Rāmīn) is drinking from a pure spring (Wīs), thus the apparently innocent song depicting a vernal idyll is in reality the allegory of the king's betrayal by his wife, Wīs, with his younger brother, Rāmīn. In both scenes the meaning of the fundamental symbolic elements and their relation with each other are the same: the stable and passive tree signifies the king; the strong and dynamic animal is the young lover; and finally the liquid (wine or water) – which belongs to the king, but unwittingly is shared with the young lover – represents the unfaithful woman. In spite of the similarities, due to the different cultural backgrounds the two stories' moral message is quite diverse: the *Wīs u Rāmīn* story originates from the Parthian epic tradition, and refers to the less strictly regulated world of the Parthian Empire, while the story of Nūšīnrawān reflects the autocratic and rigorous Sassanian era (Bertel 1960). Despite the lack of the above-mentioned three symbolic elements, due to the Parthian origin and the similiarities between the events, characters, and features, a third epic narrative, the story of *Bīžan u Maniža* is also subjected to investigation. The deep cultural embeddedness of the scenario of the betrayed old husband by a pretty wife with a young lover is demonstrated by the fact that it still has its continuation in popular plays on feast occasions on the Caspian coast.

The last study (*Le sauveur et son cheval dans la littérature persane classique et moderne:* pp. 171–218) investigates the motif of the horse, more precisely that of the motif of a hero with a horse, in classical and modern Persian literature. The first part delineates the most important hero–horse couples of the Persian epic tradition (Siyāwūs – Šabrang Bihzād and Rustam – Rakhš) and compares the horse-and-rider stories of the *Šāhnāma* with Herodotus, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and finally underlines the importance of the horse in the Islamic tradition, especially Muḥammad's ascension to heaven riding a horse, the Shia communities' custom of keeping a horse caparisoned in the case of the hidden Imam's return, and also their idea of the martyrs' ascension to heaven on horseback. Modern Persian literature has two main traditions to refer to with the horse motif: on the one hand, the Indo-Iranian concept of the hero and his permanent companion, the horse, and on the other hand, the Islamic tradition which has both eschatological and martyrological aspects. The second part of the study illustrates the ways the modern Persian prose writers (Sīmīn Dānišwar, Hūšang Gulšīrī, and Riżā Dānišwar) apply the figure of the horse allusively, combining the elements of the above-mentioned

heroic, eschatological, and martyrological traditions.

This book has the great value of giving the French translation of the quoted literary texts. When a text is available in translation, the latter is referred to. Given that the most frequently cited literary text, i.e., the *Šāhnāma* of Firdawsī, has various editions with diverse readings, using the Mohl translation along with the Mohl edition of the text – with references to the text variants (Bertel) in footnote – would have been more convenient for the reader. In the preface the author mentions the difficulties of achieving a standard transliteration and, in fact, despite a meticulously applied system, some misspellings remained in the final text. For example, Bīrūnī's name appears as Biruni (p. 36); Gardīzī's as Gardizi (p. 64); Muxuddinov instead of Muxiddonov (p. 102); in the bibliography instead of Jāmāsp-Āsānā Jāmāsp-Āsana is written (p. 16), Anquetil's *Avesta* edition is referred as Anquetil 1771 (p. 72), while in the bibliography it is listed as *Avesta* 1771. These minor shortcomings, however, do not detract from the overall merits of the book.

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